

LIBERTARIAN PARTY OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY

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Libertarian Party Withdraws Support For SB-10 Bail Reform

Local officials champion SB-10 while Libertarians join ACLU, HRW, and others in opposition

The Libertarian Party has always supported bail reform. The currently existing system comes at a financial cost both directly, through the price to not be held in pretrial detention can make bail, and indirectly through missed wages or even the loss of a job. Jail time before a trial impacts families' stability and erodes trust in the judicial system, all before guilt has been established in a court of law. Those most affected are not the stereotypical hardened criminals with a long record but first time offenders often accused of minor crimes that pose no threat to public safety.

The Libertarian Party of Santa Clara County has supported SB 10 from its start. However, we now join many other leading organizations, including the Human Rights Watch, American Civil Liberties Union, California Narcotic Officers' Association, and Silicon Valley De-Bug, in opposing the bill in its current form. This is because the revised bill includes an amendment that could allow authorized prosecutors to set indefinite pretrial detention, by circumventing due process, one of the foundations of American liberty.

"SB10 started with a clear mission of addressing the built-in discrimination of the bail system towards low-income people. The bill seemingly offers a huge step towards human rights but in the process was perverted by loopholes and exemptions for prosecutor that will exacerbate profiling and discrimination," says Jennifer Imhoff, Chair of the Libertarian Party of Santa Clara County. "Why would we include more ways for the judicial system to abuse its power during a time when public trust of the criminal system is at one of its lowest? "

This bill, in its original form, was one step forward, but the new amendments take us three steps back. Prosecutors are supposed to be the ones protecting the welfare of the people. Giving prosecutors sovereignty, as the new revisions to SB10 do, will corrupt that purpose. Now is the time to focus on building trust with the communities who have been most impacted by the state bail practice—not selling out what little trust already exists.

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The Libertarian Party (LP) was founded in 1971 and is the third largest political party in the United States. The LP seeks to expand personal freedoms, dramatically reduce taxes and government interference in the economy, and avoid meddling in overseas conflicts. The LP of Santa Clara County is an affiliate of the LP of California (LPC) and the Libertarian National Committee (LNC).